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COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR-TEST-BAN TREATY

GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT

Letter dated 25 October 1993 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Chairman of the First Committee

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of the statement issued on 21 October 1993 by the Government of the Russian Federation concerning nuclear tests (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session under agenda items 66 and 71.

(Signed) Yuliy M. VORONTSOV

Annex

STATEMENT ISSUED ON 21 OCTOBER 1993 BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION CONCERNING NUCLEAR TESTS

The Government of the Russian Federation expresses its deep regret over the conduct by China of an underground nuclear-weapon test. It should be noted that this step was taken at a time when a genuinely unique opportunity had developed in the world to put an end once and for all to all nuclear tests in the near future. The appeals of many States, including the Russian Federation, for the silence which has been established in recent times at the nuclear testing sites of all countries not to be broken have thus gone unheeded.

The Russian Federation is the initiator of the three-party moratorium on nuclear tests, which the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and China have also observed de facto. It is a well-known fact that the silence at our testing site has lasted for almost three years. On 5 July 1993, the President of the Russian Federation signed an order extending the moratorium for as long as the moratoria announced by other nuclear-weapon States are observed by them de jure or de facto.

In taking this decision, the Russian Federation was prompted solely by a desire to help to maintain a favourable climate for the initiation, in the near future, of talks on a multilateral basis with a view to the drafting of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty under effective international control. It was this, together with the important positive changes in the positions of the United States of America and France on this question which created the extremely favourable conditions for progress towards the realization of this goal.

On 10 August 1993, the Conference on Disarmament, on the basis of a consensus in which China, too, participated, adopted a decision of principle regarding the initiation of multilateral talks on the drafting of a verifiable, comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. We warmly welcomed this decision, as did the whole world.

Against this background, the resumption of nuclear tests by China cannot but have a negative effect on international efforts in this field. Many people are now asking a natural question: does not the Chinese explosion call for a reaction on the part of the other nuclear Powers in response since it has complicated the preparation of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty?

In these circumstances, the Russian Federation declares its intention to continue to adhere to the nuclear-testing moratorium and calls upon the other nuclear countries to do likewise.

At the same time, the Russian Federation retains the right to reconsider its decision regarding the moratorium in the event of the further unfavourable development of the situation in this area.

The multilateral negotiating process regarding the drafting of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty which is just beginning must not be held hostage to another's ambitions or rash decisions.

All peoples are interested in an early ban on all nuclear tests.